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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000432

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN - GEHRENBECK

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ PRESIDENTIAL PARTY EXUDES CONFIDENCE, AS
OPPOSITION GROUPS FLOUNDER

REF: BISHKEK 405

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Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch for Reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

11. (C) Summary: The pro-presidential Ak Jol party's April 29 party conference emphasized party discipline and active participation from its members. According to a Kyrgyz White House insider, President Bakiyev is growing increasingly confident of his control of the Kyrgyz political scene. The insider also pointed to possible infighting within Ak Jol, with one of the two competing groups poised to gain control over the party. Kyrgyz opposition forces, seeking to rally against a recent Kazakh-Kyrgyz land swap agreement, stopped their march from Issyk-Kul Oblast to Bishkek after encountering a group of egg-throwing, elderly, women who were allegedly organized by pro-government forces. The Kyrgyz White House views the opposition rallying cry over the land swap as a non-issue, noting that opposition leaders have limited connections to the Issyk-Kul region and local residents may benefit from the agreement. End Summary.

Keeping Up Appearances

12. (SBU) The April 29 Ak Jol party conference, which featured speeches by President Bakiyev and parliamentary faction head Elmira Ibraimova (elder sister of DFM Ermek Ibraimov), emphasized party discipline and productivity. Bakiyev and Ibraimova both praised the work of the party, especially in the successful adoption of 114 out of 144 draft laws, but cautioned that members should not veer from the party line. (Note: Bakiyev had earlier criticized officials for speaking publicly without permission and guidance. End note.) Bakiyev also spoke highly of Kyrgyzstan's economic potential, noting that the country could become completely self-sufficient in time. In her speech, Ibraimova called upon Ak Jol lawmakers to be more active in their respective constituencies, with an aim to increase party membership.

Ak Jol In-fighting

¶3. (C) In a May 2 lunch with the Ambassador and DCM, Kyrgyz White House insider Valentin Bogatyryov said that, behind the scenes at the party congress, an internal struggle for control of the party took place between two competing groups.

On one hand are those close to Presidential Chief of Staff Medet Sadyrkulov, including parliamentary faction head Ibraimova. Bakiyev's brother, Janysh, heads the other group, which includes Speaker of Parliament Adakhan Madumarov and Bishkek Mayor Daniar Usenov. Bogatyryov added that Ak Jol had voted to create two executive bodies at the congress -- a political council and a presidium -- with Sadyrkulov and Ibraimova co-chairing the latter group that, according to Bogatyryov, will make all the "real decisions" in the party. Although Janysh Bakiyev appointed the Executive Secretary to the political council, Bogatyryov said he expected Sadyrkulov to make a move to install one of his supporters in that slot, thus consolidating Sadyrkulov's control over Ak Jol.

A Beaming Bakiyev

¶4. (C) Bogatyryov also noted that the party congress was a personal triumph for Bakiyev, who feels confident in his control over Kyrgyz politics. Although initially apprehensive about creating his own party and calling for parliamentary elections along party lists a year ago, Bakiyev, Bogatyryov said, now realizes the overall political and economic benefits of the parliamentary majority of "his" Ak Jol party. Bogatyryov noted, however, the self-assurance of both Bakiyev and Sadyrkulov blinds their ability to see prospective problems and think strategically about the

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future. According to Bogatyryov, both continue to be focused on current issues, secure in their belief that they will continue to control matters in the future to the same extent they believe they do currently.

Opposition March Halted

¶5. (SBU) While the presidential administration focused on the Ak Jol party conference agenda, opposition groups organized an April 26 march against the recent Kazakh-Kyrgyz land-swap agreement (reftel). The marchers, who planned to walk from Issyk-Kul Oblast to Bishkek, encountered a group of people (mostly elderly women) in the city of Tyup, who threw eggs at the marchers and physically assaulted at least one protester (ex-MP Sherniyazov). The organizers halted the march, initially claiming that their point had been made successfully, and later accusing the government of organizing the anti-protestor group. On May 1, the opposition organizers (constituting mostly Ata Meken and ex-FM Jekshenkulov's For Justice movement) posted an open letter to Bakiyev in the opposition press, demanding the police be brought to justice for not stopping the Tyup altercation and calling for the Prosecutor General's office to investigate the incident further. To date, there has been no official response from the government.

Government Unfazed by Land Dispute

¶6. (C) During the May 2 lunch with the Ambassador, Bogatyryov said that the government had not deemed the Issyk-Kul land dispute significant. Bogatyryov noted that the presidential administration remains confident that opposition groups would not gain any supporters in Issyk-Kul for two reasons: 1) the protest organizers, Omurbek Tekebayev and Azimbek Beknazarov, are both southerners with no strong ties to the northern Issyk-Kul "elite," and 2) many poor local residents would like to benefit from future Kazakh investments. He added that Issyk-Kul business leaders, who fear a Kazakh takeover, might be the opposition's only allies in this issue.

Bogatyryov said, however, that the land dispute had helped catalyze a group of Issyk-Kul elders, who were now meeting regularly to determine a joint position on issues of the day and consolidate their power in the region with a view to influencing Bishkek. (Note: Although both Bogatyryov and Presidential Chief of Staff Sadyrkulov discount the land dispute as a real issue, roundtable participants in Osh recently expressed dissatisfaction over the deal in a discussion with the Ambassador. End note.)

Comment

17. (C) Bakiyev's call for greater discipline within Ak Jol may have been more than a gentle reminder to his party. Rumors of splits within Ak Jol's parliamentary majority continue to circulate, as parliamentary votes, while still predictable, have been slowed due to diverging opinions on issues like the Kyrgyz-Kazakh land deal and privatization. Despite these internal divisions, President Bakiyev and his supporters remain confident of achieving progress on their own terms.

YOVANOVITCH